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The Shape of Things

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WHEN THE STATE DEPARTMENT STOOD UP on its hind legs last week and told the Nazi chargé d'affaires that the United States government agrees with the opinions of the Nazi dictatorship expressed by Secretary Ickes, it spoke directly for the American people for the first time in many a month. The incomparable impudence of the Nazis in asking for apologies from officials whom their parrot press has slandered in the vilest terms has at last been countered with an expression of the anger and disgust that every decent American feels for a regime which lives by cruelty and terror. As for Secretary Ickes, who has carried on a one-man anti-Nazi campaign for months, he deserves a Congressional medal. The Nazis, in the manner of bullies, have dropped the issue as if it were a hot potato, out of deference, they say, to the "Christmas spirit"! And they have been very careful to hide from the German people the true significance of the incident.

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IN ADDITION TO THE SATISFACTION OF having the Nazis officially rebuked, the action of the State Department has of course far more important implications, which the statements of Senators Pittman and King, hinting at economic sanctions, serve to underline. A recent *Fortune* poll revealed that public opinion favors our joining with other democratic nations to prevent further expansion by Hitler and Mussolini. We hope this opinion, however, will not remain in the passive stage—resigning itself to an inevitable war inevitably involving this country. Anti-fascist emotions need to be harnessed to a program of checking the dictators here and now, of short-circuiting their ability to make war. America has the economic weapons and can use them without serious risk. The first steps must be the lifting of the embargo against shipments to Spain and the cutting off of supplies to Japan. There is no question that a victory of the Spanish Republic and a check to Japan in China would turn the tide of fascist triumph; they would also offset the pessimistic resignation to a tragic conflict which now apparently prevails.

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AFTER COOLING HIS HEELS IN LONDON FOR several months, vainly attempting to get into touch with the German government, George Rublee, director of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, has received an invitation to Berlin. The Nazis' sudden politeness springs from their hope of obtaining his cooperation in putting over their scheme for using the plight of the Jews to extort trade concessions. In its last issue *The Nation* exposed this plan as a thinly disguised ransom demand. An elaborate outline which has since been cabled from Berlin by Otto D. Tolischus to the New York *Times* more than justifies this description. We now learn that the Nazis will not be content with permitting the refugees to exchange the meager remnants of their wealth for additional exports of German goods. Such exports, it is planned, will be paid for by blocked refugee marks to the extent of only 50 to 60 per cent; the balance is to be met in free foreign exchange, thus replenishing Germany's gravely diminished resources. As Mr. Tolischus says: "In that way not only German Jews but the world's entire Jewry, which is expected to put up the money, would be impressed into Germany's export drive. They would thus subsidize German exports, help break down any boycott against German goods, help parry any such counter trade drives as the British have suggested, and indirectly finance Germany's imports of raw materials essential for her armaments." This brazen attempt to cash in on persecution must not be allowed to succeed. We hope that refugee organizations the world over will make known to Mr. Rublee and their governments their unshakable opposition to any proposals serving to underwrite Nazi aggression.

*

THE ABILITY OF THE AMERICAN NATIONS TO agree on a declaration of solidarity involving provision for consultation in case of a threat to American liberties marks the outstanding achievement of the Lima conference. Although the "Declaration of Lima" is disappointing in its failure to make specific reference to the threatened penetration of ideas and dogmas, it provides machinery for consultation in case any country is prepared to utilize it. Whether it will be used depends, as does the value of Hull's declaration of American principles, on the degree of real solidarity that was achieved behind the conference scenes. That this was less than had been hoped for is evident from Argentina's refusal to assent to a more vigorous declaration, and the consequent failure of the conference to provide for periodic consultations between the American governments. It is evident that suspicion of American policy has not been wholly allayed by the Good Neighbor doctrine. As long as this suspicion remains, Latin America will be fertile ground for fascist penetration regardless of declarations of continental solidarity. But while we should not fool ourselves into overestimating the achievements at Lima, neither should they be discounted altogether. New territory has been won in the struggle to safeguard democracy in the Western Hemisphere. Whether this ground can be held will depend on the concrete manifestations of the Good Neighbor policy in the months to come.

*

STIMULATION OF LATIN AMERICAN TRADE through a revival of foreign lending under federal auspices is reported to be the subject of study in Washington. The proposed instrument is the Export-Import Bank, through which $25,000,000 was recently made available to China. This, however, is an "emergency" institution whose charter expires next June. According to plans now being discussed, Congress will be asked to authorize the reorganization of this bank on a permanent basis. We hope that prejudice against foreign loans will not be allowed to stand in the way of this proposal. A strong case can be made out, on both political and economic grounds, for carefully directing a stream of capital to Latin America. The continent to the south of us cries out for capital and offers enormous opportunities for wise development. We, on the other hand, are plagued with the problem of finding an outlet for surplus capital. We have piled up in Kentucky a fantastic amount of gold—60 per cent of the world's monetary supply—which is far beyond the requirements of our internal credit system. If even a small part of this gold could be siphoned into Latin American economy it would do much to assist recovery there and lead to an important demand for capital goods which this country alone is in a position to supply. Financial interests will probably object that new loans ought not to be granted while old ones made by private investors remain in default. But that condition is much more likely to be remedied if constructive steps are taken to revive trade.

*

FOR THE FIRST TIME JAPAN HAS SET FORTH officially its immediate aims on the Asiatic mainland. The "conditions for peace" as announced by Premier Konoye parallel almost exactly the conditions imposed on the puppet state of Manchoukuo. Tokyo asks that Japanese troops be stationed at various points throughout China "as an anti-Communist measure"; that Japanese merchants be given the rights of freedom of residence and trade which have traditionally been denied other foreigners; that Japan receive a free hand in the economic exploitation of China; and that the puppet government of China align itself politically with the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo axis. At the same time the Japanese press has launched a campaign for the "return"—to the Japanese puppet state—of all concessions held by the Western powers, together with the British crown colony of Hongkong. There are reports that Wang Ching-wei, leader of the former pro-Japanese wing of the Kuomintang, has

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flown to Hongkong to enter into negotiations with the Japanese. The likelihood that the Chinese government would discuss peace on the terms laid down by Konoye remains, however, extremely slight—particularly at a moment when the United States and Great Britain are showing signs of awakening from their long sleep. Recent confidential reports from China indicate that morale is higher than ever, and the forty-mile Chinese advance to the gates of Yochow represents one of the most spectacular military successes of the war. A China which has endured a year and a half of reverses without the least sign of weakening is not going to give way now when the tide is turning.

*

HARRY L. HOPKINS SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN chosen as the heir apparent of the New Deal for 1940. His appointment as Secretary of Commerce is regarded as an attempt to groom him for the nomination by giving him a chance to show business that he is no "radical." The Department of Commerce's gain is WPA's loss, for Mr. Hopkins proved both his administrative ability and his liberalism in handling the huge job of relief. It is to be regretted that the President passed over Hopkins's courageous and efficient assistant, Aubrey Williams, in picking a successor as WPA Administrator. Colonel Francis C. Harrington's principal recommendation is his long and useful association with Mr. Hopkins as Chief Engineer of WPA. Mr. Williams is to be consoled with a position as head of an enlarged National Youth Administration. It is hard to resist the suspicion that Mr. Williams, in addition to making himself *persona non grata* with Southern Bourbons by his attitude toward the Negro, also got under the President's skin by his insistence on greater WPA appropriations. Mr. Williams ended his services on WPA with an appeal to Congress for an immediate emergency appropriation, warning that otherwise funds will be exhausted by February 7, and WPA will have to be suspended. That must be Congress's first move, for the ending of WPA would be a human calamity and economically disastrous.

*

WE RISE TO APPLAUD THE COMMITTEE ON the Bill of Rights of the American Bar Association for the splendid action it has taken in the Hague case. The committee, formed last August, made Jersey City its first order of business and has now filed a brief *amicus curiae* in the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, Philadelphia, in defense of the C. I. O.'s right to hold street meetings in Jersey City. Frank J. Hogan, president of the Bar Association, said that the committee would defend the civil liberties "of rich and poor alike," and it has made good that pledge. The committee's stand is made the more striking and effective by the character of its membership. Only one of the men on it, Zechariah Chafee, Jr., is identified with liberal causes. Grenville Clark, the chairman, is an outstanding corporation lawyer, a partner in the firm of the late Elihu Root. Joseph A. Padway, of Wisconsin, appeared against the C. I. O. as counsel for the A. F. of L. only a few weeks ago when the Consolidated Edison case was before the Supreme Court. John Francis Neylan is a Hearst lawyer; Osmer C. Fitts is a partner of Coolidge's Attorney General, John G. Sargent. Two, Douglas Arant of Alabama and Monte M. Lemann of New Orleans, are Southern conservatives. The position they have taken is encouraging indication of an awakening on the right to the menace that Hagueism represents in American life.

*

THE NAZIS CELEBRATED CHRISTMAS BY reviving the rites of the early barbarians who lived and killed by barbarian rules. "This night [*sic*]," yelled the German press, "belongs to us." They forgot to mention that according to the laws of nature, which the Nazis have invoked in all their most brutal acts, day always follows night. We give you "Der Tag!"

Behind the Franco Lines

THE Franco authorities officially admit arresting several hundred conspiring army officers. Outside sources put the figure at over a thousand and add that many of the rebels against the rebels have been shot. The recent disturbances in insurgent Spain are a momentary flash lighting up the increasing dissatisfaction in Franco territory.

The Catholics are dissatisfied. Gil Robles, leader of the Catholic Action and former War Minister, returned to Franco territory last summer. The fascist Falange attacked him and threatened him. He went back into exile after forty-eight hours. The pro-Loyalist Catholic daily of Paris, *La Croix,* said recently: "The influence of Hitlerism gains ground every day in the entourage of Generalissimo Franco. While the Supreme Pontiff's condemnations of racism have passed almost entirely unnoticed in Spain [the Franco censor prohibited them.—Editors *The Nation*], the writings of Hitler, Rosenberg, and Streicher are translated into Spanish and widely circulated." Cardinal Goma has been having trouble with Queipo de Llano, the drunken broadcasting general of Seville.

The Monarchists are dissatisfied. The Carlist Requettes and the rich peasant Navarrese, Franco's best Spanish soldiers, have complained that they are being used too much at the front while the Falangists stay at home. In fact, the Navarrese bore the brunt of the fighting in the Ebro battle, and their officers apparently have no desire to engage in another offensive which will certainly be bloody and almost as certainly indecisive, especially since

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the Falangists have ignored three appeals from Franco to go to the front. Their reply was printed in an early edition, immediately confiscated, of the San Sebastian daily *Unidad* of October 2. "The *Caudillo* [Franco] should know," it said, "that Spain will not become the cemetery of patriots." The Falangists of course are such good patriots that they must not die.

The Falangists are dissatisfied. First, they resent the pressure on them to leave their offices and safe staff positions behind the front in order to fight. Secondly, they object to Franco's Monarchist leanings. The difficulty among the Franco officers came immediately after his declaration that Alfonso's citizenship and property had been restored. Probably also the Germans did not like that. Alfonso has been living in Rome.

The business men are dissatisfied. Regularly the rebel press prints official announcements of numerous industrial and trade contracts let to German and sometimes to Italian firms. The economic system of the insurgent zone is permeated with foreign fascist influence.

The people are dissatisfied with thirty months of unfruitful war fought, as they now see, in the interests of foreign powers. They are not happy about the impending third winter of that war.

But the terror is murderous, and the people cannot express their displeasure. Army officers can, now and then, for a moment. Franco can suppress them; he cannot eradicate the causes of their disaffection. It is known that rebel officers abroad have tried to establish contacts with Loyalists. The Franco offensive has at the present writing made little real progress, and if it fails to extend its gains very sensationally, the discontent with Franco will run deeper and perhaps even explode.

The A. M. A. on Trial

AT LONG last the times have caught up with the American Medical Association. Last week's indictment of it, together with the Medical Society of the District of Columbia, the Washington Academy of Surgery, and twenty-one physicians of Chicago and Washington, by a District of Columbia grand jury on the charge of violating the Sherman Anti-Trust Act marks the end of an era. For years the medical profession, as represented by the A. M. A., has been above the law. It has assumed that it had the right to decide for itself not only matters directly affecting medical care but the economic arrangements under which such care is given.

That these arrangements, however satisfactory they may be to physicians, do not provide adequate medical service to the American people has become increasingly evident. The recent National Health Survey showed that one-fourth of the 8,000,000 cases of illness which are disabling for a week or longer each year receive no care from a physician. Among families on relief 30 per cent of cases of this character are untended. For families with incomes of less than $1,000, the proportion is 28 per cent. Cases of illness, disabling for a week or more, in families with incomes of over $3,000 receive, on the average, 46 per cent more medical attention than similar cases in families on relief.

When several doctors in Washington, D. C., agreed a year ago to provide full medical care to a group of goverment employees, on a prepayment plan, such care to be based on health requirements rather than income, the Medical Society of the District instituted a virtual boycott against these doctors. In the past it would have doubtless succeeded, as other A. M. A. branches have succeeded in ruining many enlightened physicians. But in this case the employees of a government agency were involved, and the Department of Justice has taken the position that the A. M. A., when it enters the economic field, is no more sacred than any other organization of profit-makers. If a combination of steel-makers for the restraint of trade is against the interest of society, what about a combination of physicians which threatens the health of the community?

Signs that the times are catching up with the A. M. A. may be found within the organization as well as without. The first important break within the ranks occurred in mid-December when the California Medical Association approved a plan for prepaid medical care on a voluntary insurance basis. The plan is similar, except in minor detail, to the Washington plan: California residents will be able to have full medical, surgical, and hospital services for approximately $2.50 a month for each person. Some type of voluntary prepaid medical service is expected to be offered in New York State within the next few months, probably as a supplement to the present 3-cents-a-day hospital insurance.

All these moves are hopeful ones. None of them, however, meet the fundamental problem. Few, if any, families whose incomes are less than $1,100 a year—half the total number of American families—will be attracted by a voluntary plan necessitating payments of $10 to $36 a year per person. Yet this is the group which the National Health Survey shows to be sick the most frequently and to have the least medical care. Their needs can be met only by compulsory health insurance or the development of a system of state medicine. Toward either plan the A. M. A. remains unalterably opposed. Doubtless it will continue its opposition as long as the small clique headed by Dr. Fishbein dominates A. M. A. policies. But conviction of Fishbein and his associates by the courts should put an end to their influence, and the government's action must add fuel to the revolt against the A. M. A. politicians already under way within the medical profession.

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Hope for 1939

DEMOCRACY must needs look back on 1938 as a year of defeat; nor can it look forward with confidence to 1939. In the past year fascism has made immense gains and reinforced its power for evil. Hitler and Mussolini have perhaps won their victories by bluffing on weak cards; now they appear to hold all the aces. The Nazification of Central Europe is going on apace, and such flimsy and disconnected barriers as are being erected against it look like tissue paper in comparison with Nazi might. England and France, divided, their morale shaken, lacking in leadership, seem to have resigned both as great powers and as champions of democracy; to have no mission left save to smooth the fascist path to world domination.

This is the kind of picture which unbending realists are apt to present to us. Some of them, abandoning Europe in disgust, would have us withdraw into strict isolation—a new Byzantium in a new and drearier Dark Age. Others, still more despondent, see this country, too, fatally infected with the fascist virus and assert, almost with resignation, that nothing can stop its happening here.

We should be the last to deny the necessity for cool realism, for refusing to run away from unpleasant facts. But is there not some danger that democrats, in their anxiety to steer clear of the Scylla of wish-fulfilment, will wreck themselves on the Charybdis of defeatism? If so, it may be well, while giving full weight to the difficulties ahead to consider also the existing grounds for hope.

There is one front in Europe where democracy has not broken in 1938. Despite constant battering, despite fascist intervention and British "non-intervention," despite hunger and hardship, the Spanish Loyalists have stood firm. In the spring, when Chamberlain made his infamous pact with Mussolini, the assumption of reactionaries the world over was that Franco's victory was a mere matter of weeks. The Loyalists lost ground but not their spirit, and by their counter-offensive on the Ebro they ruined the fascist time-table. Still more heartening is the fact that despite the exigencies of a war fought against terrific odds, the Spanish government has not turned to totalitarianism. On the contrary, democracy is more alive in Spain than at the beginning of the war, and from it springs a unity which regimentation can never rival. While the Spanish front holds, how can we say that democracy is doomed in Europe? And while we have the opportunity to strengthen that front by lifting the embargo, how can we say there is nothing we can do to check the fascist tide?

Let us turn from Europe's brightest hope to its darkest spots—to Germany and Italy, where another year of triumphs may appear to have established dictatorial power on an unshakable foundation. Hitler and Mussolini would have us believe that their regimes are solidly backed by their whole nations, that they have completed the conquest of the minds of their peoples. Yet if we scratch beneath the surface we find indications that neither country has really become a satisfactory fascist anthill. On another page of this issue Albert Viton writes of the disillusion and discontent he found in Italy and the ever more drastic repression needed to keep it under. He warns us against assumption that this underground ferment may lead to early revolt. Yet its existence is important. On the one hand it drives Mussolini into more and more desperate expedients to maintain his power; on the other, it makes such adventures more and more dangerous, a fact that would speedily become apparent were the democracies to call his bluffs.

In Italy the September crisis revealed a widespread fear of war and an overwhelming dislike for the German alliance. In Germany also there is criticism and distrust of Italy coupled with a strong revulsion against war. Reliable observers recently in Germany report that the spontaneous emotion evoked by Munich was thankfulness for peace. Relief at the bloodless victory was accompanied by doubts about the value of the victory itself, and by fears that it must drive Germany forward to some new impasse from which there could be no peaceful exit.

Again, the reaction of the German public to the pogrom showed that the Nazis have not yet succeeded in lowering Germany to their own level. It is true there were no organized protests, but there were scattered, gallant attempts to intervene, there were Aryans who took risks to help or shelter Jews, and, above all, there were innumerable expressions of disgust and pathetic attempts to convince foreigners that Nazi brutality did not represent "the real Germany." Too much significance must not be attached to these manifestations. They do not mean we can count on internal upheaval; but they do suggest that behind the imposing Nazi façade there is a growing lack of morale. Add to this mounting economic difficulties, accentuated rather than moderated by the Anschluss and the capture of Sudetenland, and we get a picture of a Third Reich which is by no means a happy and united nation.

What of democratic morale? It is not to be gainsaid that it has wavered badly in the past year. But there are signs of recovery. In America we are beginning to grasp what the spread of fascism must mean. We are beginning to realize that we cannot stay aloof from the battle. Our task for 1939 is to shake off defeatism, to take our part in the active defense of democracy. What was true of the union in 1860 is true of the world today: it cannot permanently endure half fascist and half free. Can we evade our responsibility for insuring that it is liberty which will ultimately triumph?

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Washington's Big Show

BY KENNETH G. CRAWFORD

Washington, December 23

NOW that advance agents of the Seventy-sixth Congress have arrived in Washington to distribute the annual blurbs on the big show, it is possible to tell something about the kind of acts the winter and spring will bring forth under the big dome. There will be more freaks than usual. About half of the newly elected Republicans, for example, will be for the Townsend plan but at the same time devoted to rugged individualism, the traditional American way, low taxes, and government economy. The hookworm Democrats will be more savage than ever after the attempted purge. Dependable New Dealers will be definitely reduced to minority status in both branches.

It is not a pretty prospect. The final Congressional session of every two-term Administration has been a futile affair. This one, judging from advance billings, will be even more so. Already the returning members have made it clear that hopes for some sort of Democratic unity, based on the assumption that an enlarged Republican minority would distract the majority from family fights, were engendered by wishful analysis of the election returns.

Harry Byrd, spokesman for the arch-reactionaries, has denounced the Administration as the most extravagant in the nation's history and demanded reduction of relief spending. Burt Wheeler, back from the wars with Jerry O'Connell's scalp, has joined in the clamor for state administration of relief. King, of Utah, has demanded, with a straight face, that the WPA be turned over to the states "to keep politics out of relief." Rush Holt, the boy blunder, has a no-third-term resolution. Edward Burke, who divested himself of liberalism at the close of his 1934 campaign, is demanding mutilation of the Wagner Act to make it fair to business. Pat Harrison, always the little brother of big business, is running around promising no tax increases, and "indulging the hope" that the budget will be balanced by economy.

These Senate Democrats are already off the reservation. Whatever program President Roosevelt produces, they will oppose it. They are back where they were when they scuttled the Supreme Court reform plan in the last Congress. If anything they are more intransigent, it having been proved to their satisfaction since then that the President can't hurt them. Garner and a group of less violently reactionary Democrats will go along with the President if he trims his sails to suit their listless wind. He will perforce do some trimming. There will be no reforms or advancements of the social frontier at this session. Roosevelt will have his hands full saving the WPA, the Labor Board, and what is left of his tax structure. His emphasis will be on reinforced national defense, the one policy on which reasonable unanimity can be expected. The blundering of Germany and Japan will keep the international stew bubbling to prove a continued incentive for preparedness. Modification of the Neutrality Act to permit more flexibility may possibly slip through as a national-defense measure, but the Corcoran plan of lump-sum defense appropriations has been abandoned. The government-reorganization bill would seem to have no chance if the President insists, as he says he will, on retaining the principle of executive freedom to transfer bureaus. The new anti-trust legislation will not be ready until 1940.

In the Senate first blood will be drawn on the President's nominations. These will be bold. Compromises on policy will not be carried over into Cabinet personnel. Harry Hopkins, anti-Christ to the economy bloc, has already been nominated for Secretary of Commerce to replace Dan Roper. Garner has warned the President that this will mean a fight, but apparently the Vice-President is willing to help confirm Hopkins and it seems reasonably certain that he will be confirmed. Donald Wakefield Smith, NLRB member nominated for reappointment, will be bitterly opposed by the combined forces of the right and the stooges of the A. F. of L. His chances are slim. It now appears that Robert Jackson will be advanced to fill the vacancy left by the retirement of Attorney General Homer Cummings and that Governor Frank Murphy of Michigan will get some important federal appointment, but probably not Justice Cardozo's place on the Supreme Court.

The new House defies prediction or classification. Its Democratic membership includes most of the old pests, like Martin Dies, who has been bloated into a national figure with the publicity generated by his $25,000 investigation of "un-American activities." Dies at first demanded $1,000,000 to continue his investigation but now has decided to settle for $150,000. On the basis of the Gallup poll, showing that a substantial majority of voters want Communists and fascists investigated, he probably can't be stopped from getting $50,000. He may do wonders with it in 1940.

But the biggest issue in the House will be joined by proposals to liberalize the Social Security Act. Most Re-

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publicans, committed to Dr. Townsend's $100 a month, now in the process of being reduced to $80, are hoping against hope that they will be spared the necessity of voting their campaign convictions. But the Democratic leadership will insist upon putting them on record. The ultimate outcome probably will be the adoption of the moderate liberalization program of the President's Federal Social Security Board, which would extend benefits to 2,600,000 persons not now covered, start payments in 1940 instead of 1942, and hold down reserve-fund accumulation. It will be interesting to see how the Townsend Republicans, who regard themselves as products of the reaction from Roosevelt on all issues except "something for the old folks," will vote on this issue.

Inconceivable as it seems, there may be a majority in Congress for curtailing WPA relief appropriations sharply, if not for adopting such an absurd plan as King's. The result of such curtailment would, of course, be as disastrous to business generally as to the unemployed. This was proved by the 1937 relief-economy wave. A deficiency appropriation of at least $1,000,000,000 is necessary, but it will be hard to get. Aside from relief, threatened mutilation of the Wagner Act presents the most alarming immediate prospect. The Smith nomination will throw a straw to the wind on this. If Smith is defeated, Senator Wagner may present some modifying amendments to stave off attack by the Burke crowd. If not, he will probably stand with the C. I. O. against any weakening.

The President's only check-rein on the incoming Congress is his continued personal popularity, coupled with the third-term threat. So long as there is a chance that he will be President again after 1940 there is a possibility of further Roosevelt patronage. So long as there is a chance that he will name his successor, Secretary of Commerce Hopkins, for example, there is also that possibility. But if he loses in an early battle, the war of the Seventy-sixth Congress will be lost. The Republicans, holding the balance of power, will, if they get the chance, let the people eat economy.

Italy Under Hitler

BY ALBERT VITON

Rome, December 13

IT IS a new Italy that I find after an absence of more than three years. The basis of this Italy was laid when I was there in 1935; the superstructure has developed in the interim. It is an Italy with an insatiable thirst for power and for expansion, an Italy with a nationalism that, probably for the first time since the establishment of the regime, has become definitely and visibly pernicious, an Italy for which the earth is just too small. On the other hand, it is a hungry Italy, an Italy in which the standard of living has visibly declined, in which there is more restlessness, more criticism of the regime, and more fear than I ever saw before.

In 1935 I found military men very skeptical of Italy's ability to carry on a major war; now they have a tremendous self-confidence which may yet lead them to wild adventures. The victories in Spain and Ethiopia seem to have turned their heads. On the other hand, the middle classes and especially the laborers, while partaking fully of the offensive nationalism, are much more critical of the regime and its policies, both internal and foreign, than I ever found them before. A young Italian who had been a member of the party from 1922 to 1931 assured me that not less than 80 per cent of the population was opposed to the regime. I disputed his figure, suggesting that he was living under an illusion. As a traveling salesman, however, he insisted that he knew his Italy and that foreign observers meet only the official and upper classes, who naturally support the regime. "If you want to know the truth, talk to people singly," he said; "when three or four get together each one is afraid of the other."

In the spring of this year the country was engulfed by a wave of dissatisfaction with the deterioration in the quality of bread. Fearing a shortage of wheat, the government had ordered bakers to use a high percentage of other flour. After the outcry the government rescinded the order. Certainly the situation in the northern part of the country is by no means satisfactory. That Mussolini recently canceled a planned visit to Turin because the police chief would not guarantee his safety is common knowledge. What brought about the situation is not exactly known. Some say that troops back from Spain, considering themselves privileged, had taken to highway robbery and terrorized the population; others think that there had been some labor unrest. A usually reliable observer claims that "Down with the Regime" had been found painted on buildings in the center of Turin. The king was forced by an extraordinarily cold reception from the populace to curtail his visit in Turin, and Mussolini has had to cancel planned visits to a whole group of industrial towns around Trieste.

Without question Mussolini is more popular than the regime. I have heard people denouncing the government and all it stands for but expressing great admiration for

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the personality of the Duce. Count Ciano, Mussolini's son-in-law; Starace, the secretary of the party; Alfieri, and many other high Fascist dignitaries are detested almost universally, and all unpopular measures are generally attributed to them. Ciano, for example, is supposed to be the author and chief advocate of the pro-German policy; Starace is alleged to have championed the intervention in Spain; Graziani is the one who led Mussolini into the Ethiopian adventure.

No recent act of Mussolini's has been more genuinely popular than his recall of 10,000 volunteers from Spain. And Mussolini knew it would be popular. One can say without qualification that the whole population, with the exception perhaps of the military, regards the Spanish adventure as a huge mistake and is thoroughly tired of it. Assured a thousand times of an immediate Franco victory, people are disappointed to find the struggle dragging on interminably. Italians wonder what Mussolini expects to get out of Spain except friendship and prestige. The rise in the price of foodstuffs is popularly attributed to the Spanish war.

The Ethiopian adventure has also won much less favor than was anticipated. As one observer put it, "People agree that both Spain and Ethiopia are bones in the throat; it is, however, difficult to extract them." To swallow them appears to be no less difficult. The official press talks constantly of the infinite mineral wealth of the new empire, but most people see in Ethiopia only a drain on Italy's financial, material, and human resources. Only the military and to a certain extent the university youth really support the Ethiopian business. The latter see in the creation of a colonial empire new openings for jobs. Many students are specializing in colonial administration—and wondering how they will look in sun helmets.

WAR-TIME ECONOMY

Italy's financial condition has certainly deteriorated during the past three years. The two wars and the preparations for a third have fallen heavily on the shoulders of the people. Italian economic life is now practically conducted on a war basis. Public finance is shrouded by a veil which no observer that I spoke to had succeeded in penetrating—and that includes many commercial attachés. In 1935 the Bank of Issue still published fortnightly statements of its reserves of gold and foreign currency; no such statements have been published during the past two years. On December 31, 1930, the bank had a reserve in gold and foreign currency of 9,625 million lire; by June, 1936, this had fallen to 2,266 million.

Budgetary deficits have grown steadily. The fiscal year 1934-35 closed with a deficit of 2,030,000,000 lire; at the end of the following fiscal year the deficit had grown to 12,686,000,000; during 1936-37 it amounted to 16,230,000,000 lire. How large the deficit was during the past fiscal year is not yet known. Inevitably the public debt has grown. On September 30, 1935, it amounted to 107,078,000,000 lire; but no one that I spoke to could tell me how large it is by now. The government has ceased publishing even doctored statistics. These budgetary deficits have grown in spite of the increased taxes for war needs and in spite of the various capital levies. In October, 1936, a levy was imposed on all real-estate owners to the value of 5 per cent of the property. The levy took the form of a forced loan redeemable in twenty years; but unless the owners preferred to pay the levy outright, their taxes were increased not only to redeem the loan but to cover the cost of the service. On October 23 of the following year another levy was imposed on all corporations. As modified after discussion in the Chamber, this levy took between 7 and 8 per cent of the capital and reserves of joint-stock companies and partnerships, and yielded about 5,000 million lire. The turn of small businesses came a few weeks ago, when a new capital levy of 7½ per cent on private shops was enacted. People now wonder who will be next.

Taxes have caused much dissatisfaction among the masses. Wages and salaries, no matter how small, are now subject to a tax of 8 per cent, for which the employer is responsible. This tax is therefore subtracted before the employee sees his pay envelope. Taxes on articles of consumption have grown. Gasoline is three times its original price—a gallon costs now about 75 cents. Sugar, tobacco, matches, salt, and so forth are also expected to bring more revenue than before. I have checked with a number of business men and office workers and it appears that the former now have to pay about 40 per cent of their income, however small, to the state; the latter, if they are married and have at least two children, pay somewhat more than 20 per cent.

The clothes people wear are old and shabby. The price has gone up and the quality down. The retail price of clothing—taking January, 1936, as 100, when prices had already gone up considerably—stood at 140 in July, 1937, and at 134 in July last. The cost of living as a whole has advanced from 74 in September, 1934, to 99 in September of this year, and the cost of food has gone up from 68 to 92. But these figures do not tell the whole story. The rise in price of essential articles—bread, spaghetti, cheese, olive oil—has been much greater than indicated in these figures. Yet wages, even taking the most optimistic figures I have heard, have not increased more than 20 per cent. According to the last Annuaro Statistico, published by the Institute of Statistics, the wages of white-collar workers increased only 14 per cent between 1935 and the end of 1937.

The great catchword at the moment is "autarchy." On November 17 I was present when Mussolini opened a great exhibition called "Our Autarchy of Italian Minerals." A tremendous amount of money and labor is being spent on working mineral deposits of no economic

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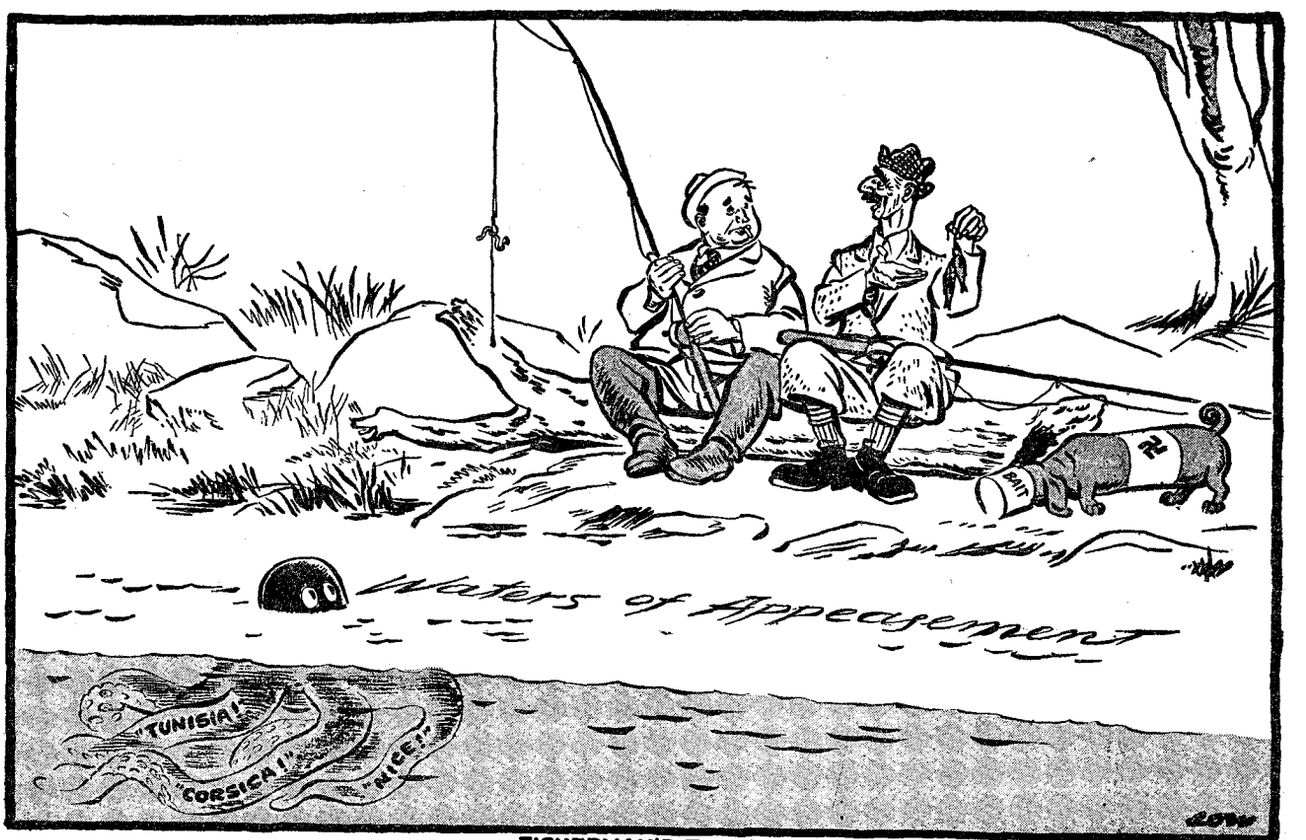
value. An official publication, for example, announces that "attention is now directed toward the extraction of the high percentage of iron, 20 to 25 per cent, contained in the sand of certain sections of the seacoast." Coal veins of no value are being worked; large sums are being put into the development of Albanian oil with a high sulphur content and filled with extraneous matter. The use of home-grown fiber for the textile industry is increasing. At the order of the government the ratio of imported to inferior native wool in the manufacture of clothing has fallen from six-to-one to fifty-fifty.

The home population can be compelled to purchase goods of any quality if foreign competition is eliminated, but all economic observers are now asking how, given the movement toward autarchy, Italy can expect to compete on the world market. For one thing the best goods are, of course, sent abroad, and the government is heavily subsidizing the export trade. But in the end the Italian people have to pay with a lower standard of living. The 1937 "Yearbook of the Fascist Confederation of Industrialists" contains the following highly illuminating statistical table: taking 1929 as 100, industrial employment at the end of 1936 had reached 94.90, but the amount paid in wages stood at 73.81.

TERROR AND "CAPILLARITY"

Because of the discontent the secret police are much more active than in previous years. In 1935 I heard comparatively little about them; now, however they make their presence felt. A friend told me that at a fireworks show a man standing near him said, "For this there is money, but there is none for feeding our starving children." He had hardly finished the sentence when someone tapped him on the shoulder and took him off. The number of plain-clothes men on the Piazza Venezia has noticeably increased. Telephone tapping has been systematized to a high degree. The material thus obtained is summarized every day in every city and passed on to the district authorities. They in turn pass it on to Rome, where it is boiled down for Mussolini's perusal. According to an absolutely reliable source, the first thing Mussolini does in the morning is to read this report.

A word now heard frequently in Fascist circles is "capillarity." According to this doctrine only fascism provides real democracy since the government is in constant touch with the broad masses of the people. Fascists will tell you that the hundred and one organizations with which nearly the whole population comes in contact—the various guilds, the social-service organizations, the party, and the recreation units—serve as tribunes for public opinion, which is gradually transmitted, through constantly narrowing channels as it moves upward, to the head of the state. Much is now being made of this doctrine. Of course, it really works the other way around. The Fascist state is "capillary" in the sense that through these various organizations but especially through the extensive network of police espionage the head of the state is in constant touch with every particle in the body politic. But instead of the will of the people reaching upward and affecting policy, the will of Mussolini reaches downward. Only occasionally, when in a comparatively unimportant matter popular dissatisfaction



FISHERMAN'S TALES

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reaches a high pitch—as in the bread situation—does the head of the state find it advisable to give in to the popular will. During the war crisis of last September public opinion went to great lengths to express opposition to the German connection; Mussolini, however, refused to budge, and assured his critics in a public speech that they would "be dealt with."

ANTI-GERMANISM AND THE AXIS

Whoever thinks that the Rome-Berlin axis will snap tomorrow—or if not tomorrow, the day after—is sadly mistaken. The axis is a functioning organism. It works. I know of no way to emphasize sufficiently this overwhelming fact, pregnant with immeasurable consequences. Next in importance comes the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo triangle. The axis and the triangle—these are the foundation stones of Italian foreign policy; and the chances of the cornerstones being undermined in the near future are very slight indeed.

A joke now current in Rome states that for Germany the colonial question has been settled. It has obtained Italy. The Germans certainly make their presence felt to an extraordinary degree. There is a constant influx of German experts of one sort or another. Much of the present autarchy campaign is directed by Germans. It is not impossible that the recent anti-Jewish laws were actually written by Germans. Many German officials are reputed to be working in the Ministry of the Interior. Italian foreign trade is coming to depend more and more on the Reich; it is expected that during this year more than a third of it will be with Germany.

To make the triangle more tangible an intense propaganda campaign is spreading a certain kind of knowledge about Japan. Publications devoted to the glorification of the Aryan race and to exposing the wicked designs of other races never mention the "yellow peril" except to refer to Chinese communism. The Japanese invasion of China is of course a great crusade of Western civilization against Asiatic bolshevism. There is much propaganda for better trade relations within the triangle; some writers even advocate a customs union to counterbalance the British imperial system. Obviously the immediate concrete value of the triangle cannot be compared with that of the axis, but it is often said here that the triangle will come into its own in the event of a world war or a war against Soviet Russia.

Without doubt no other single policy of Mussolini's has evoked so much general opposition, without distinction of rank or station, as his German policy. The Germans are almost universally detested, especially among the common people. The showing of a newsreel in a Roman movie house was interrupted not long ago by exclamations of "Enough" when shots of the Führer were thrown on the screen. Older people, to whom a buffer state on the northern frontier has been a dogma, are dismayed by the menace which the might of Germany constitutes, and wonder what possessed Mussolini to permit the occupation of Austria. A Fascist official confessed to me that "Mussolini might have carried us into a war on the side of Germany, but not for long." During the September crisis many adopted the unique method of speaking their thoughts into telephones during conversations with friends, in the hope that their opinion would be overheard. To make sure of their views being brought to the attention of the authorities many expressed themselves to persons whose telephones are always tapped.

Mussolini is not ignorant of the unpopularity of his foreign policy, but he is determined to stick to the alliance and to strengthen it. Since Hitler has so far reaped greater benefits from the axis than his partner, most observers here feel that the hour of payment will have to come. This view, let me add, is not shared by everybody; some diplomatic observers who claim to have pipelines to the Duce maintain that Mussolini does not insist on immediate payment. Most persons, however, are convinced that if only to maintain his prestige Mussolini will have to show some concrete profits from the axis—and show them soon. Many point to the feverish activity in armament factories as proof that preparations for a crisis are continuing.

The main question at the moment is where and when the axis will strike. Speculation is rife about Tunis and French Somaliland. The latter is especially important because of Djibouti harbor and the Addis Ababa railroad. The thought of an offensive against British interests at the outset seems to have been given up. Instead, more and more attention is being devoted to the French colonial empire, the dismemberment of which, some Italians think, the British would not seriously oppose. Yet it is difficult to see how Italy could obtain either Somaliland or Tunis without violating the agreement just signed with England. A move against Tunis would of course seriously upset the status quo in the Mediterranean, which is the basis of the agreement, while a change on the Red Sea could not but affect British interests profoundly. Mussolini will not risk lightly a violation of the agreement which might lead to its renunciation by England, for no other measure, except perhaps the recall of the soldiers from Spain, has been so genuinely popular as the English pact. Possibly it is too much to say, as some do, that it has saved the regime; certain it is, however, that more than anything else it has bolstered up Mussolini's prestige among all sections of the population.

In his foreign policy as in internal affairs Mussolini has been impaled on a dilemma from which escape is likely to prove impossible. He needs England to counterbalance somewhat the growing German influence; yet the agreement rules out any imperial expansion which might be his reward for service to the axis. Moreover, it is not so certain that Hitler is anxious to pay. Yet to break away

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from the axis would be suicide. A democratic Italy, by aligning itself with France and other democratic powers, might conceivably overcome the German menace in the north, but such a course would spell the collapse of the regime at no distant date.

ANTI-SEMITISM AND THE VATICAN

Only in the light of internal and external difficulties can the Jewish situation in Italy be understood. Sufficient for a prison sentence in Italy is to be overheard saying that Mussolini is aping Hitler in his anti-Jewish legislation; he is aping Hitler because he has to. It is probable that Hitler demanded a common Jewish policy during his recent visit to Rome. Today the Jewish problem, which has been badly mishandled by the world press, is at least as serious in Italy as in Germany—possibly more so.

Yet during my stay in Rome and other cities in 1935 I went out of my way to search for a Jewish problem and found none. No cloud hung over the sky for years; when the storm broke it took the political weather forecasters by complete surprise. No anti-Jewish propaganda which had taken root had prepared the Italian people—or the Jews. But the storm has been as ferocious and devastating as it was sudden. The Italian government has not provided any of those ameliorating measures which, certainly during the first four years, left avenues of escape open to German Jews.

The anti-Jewish decrees have followed one another with the rapidity of machine-gun firing, and with worse effects. In less than three months they have achieved the following: no Jewish student, Italian or foreign, is allowed to begin studies in a university; all Jewish students have been expelled from high schools; special classes have been opened in the elementary schools for Jewish children, who must enter the building through a special door; all Jews who entered Italy since the World War, whether naturalized or not, must get out before March 1, 1939; Italian Jews cannot own urban real estate which produces an income of more than $1,000 annually or more than about fifty acres of rural property; they cannot own factories employing more than 300 workers; "Aryan" maids must not serve in Jewish homes; all Jews in the service of the state, whether in the civil service or the armed forces or semi-state institutions, have been dismissed; all Jewish teachers, university professors, journalists, writers, and artists have been dismissed; a Jew may not appear on the stage, nor may the work of a Jewish writer, Italian or foreign, be published; banks, insurance companies, and other financial institutions may not be directed by Jews and must dismiss their Jewish employees; the Jewish owner of a shop or any business may not leave his property to his children; no new Jewish employees may be taken on by any organization. This list is by no means complete, but it gives a fair idea of the thoroughness with which the work has been done.

What is the role of the Italian people in this tragedy? Is it staging anti-Jewish riots and demonstrations, is it smashing windows, are mobs attacking Jews? Have the Italian masses all of a sudden become conscious of their exalted Aryan origin and begun to despise the lowly Jew? Nothing of the sort. Anybody who knows anything at all about Italy will agree with me that 90 per cent of the population does not like these laws. Most people, the vast majority of the population, do not understand what it is all about. In Germany the movement began, at least superficially, in the lower classes and hardly ever reached the upper strata; here it began at the very top. Italians have confessed to me that, coming on top of his other recent mistakes, the anti-Jewish laws have convinced them that Mussolini has lost his head.

It would be a grave injustice not to mention the courageous attitude shown by the Vatican. The Vatican was the first to speak out against the new racial dogmas, terming them "excessive nationalism." It had no legal means of implementing its opposition to the anti-Jewish laws, but it never left any doubt about where it stood. Only when Mussolini prohibited marriage between Aryan and non-Aryan Christians was it given an opportunity for official intervention. In very polite letters addressed to the King and to Mussolini the Vatican pointed out that the prohibition of such marriages was a clear violation of the Concordat, by which the state agreed to confirm marriages solemnized by the church. The Vatican has also gone out of its way to extend aid to baptized Jews.

Events have driven the Vatican more and more to the conclusion that peace between the church and the Fascist state is impossible. This conclusion has been unwelcome to the papacy; for years it struggled against it. A liberal French journalist who for years has asserted publicly and privately that fascism and Christianity are fundamentally irreconcilable told me of a high church dignitary who used to grant the basic incompatibility between the two but argue that a *modus vivendi* might yet be found. About a month ago, however, this prelate said to him, "I have been mistaken. I now see the impossibility of finding even a temporary *modus vivendi* with this monster. It must be crushed." One priest said to me, "The greatest battle in the history of the Catholic church is looming on the horizon."

Unfortunately, the chances of the church winning this battle are extremely small. It might still win on the international front, but in Italy the church has ceased to be a power. In the official Fascist trinity of loyalties the church comes only third and last, and that is its position in the heart of the Italian youth. In Rome the Vatican has no longer any influence whatever, and churchmen make no denial of this fact. Meanwhile, Mussolini is ceaselessly trying to capture the church and make it the handmaid of his policies. The next struggle will probably be fought within the church itself.

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Three Southern Towns

I. TUPELO: FEUDALISM AND TVA

BY WILLSON WHITMAN

THE Tennessee Valley has no big cities but a hundred county seats. These valley towns differ, as the seven valley states differ, in history and character; but more interesting than their local color is the fact that arrested Southern economy has preserved intact various stages of economic progress, each of which may be almost perfectly exemplified in some one town. To consider in turn Tupelo, Mississippi, Huntsville, Alabama, and Kingsport, Tennessee, is to range all the way from rugged individualism through decadent capitalism to streamlined industrial planning, or from feudalism to fascism in three hard lessons.

Tupelo, Mississippi, is called "the TVA city" by the local chamber of commerce. In 1933 Congressman John E. Rankin persuaded his home town to plug in government power, and now it is known throughout the country as the satisfied first customer of TVA current.

Mr. Rankin admits that it took some argument, but argument in Tupelo is simple because you can do most of it with one man. Suppose you wanted to talk to the vice-president of the Tupelo Cotton Mills, or the president of the Tupelo Garment Company, or the president of the Citizens' Bank of Tupelo; or suppose you had business with the Tupelo Brick and Tile Company, or with R. D. Reed and Company, the Main Street department store—in each case you would ask for Mr. Rex Reed. Or you might be interested in the local hospital, or the Red Cross, or the Tupelo Rotary Club, or have an inquiry for the state board of public welfare; again the best man to see would be Mr. Rex Reed. Of course there are other business men in Tupelo, a town with a population of some 6,000, and others who believe with Mr. Reed that the road to success is service, but there is not much business, public or private, that is not somehow connected with the Reed enterprises.

It was rumored that the Tupelo Cotton Mills saved $18,000 on their power bills the first year they had TVA power. Norman Thomas wondered out loud if companies which saved money by the use of government power would pass on their savings to their workers. The answer was given at Tupelo: just about the time the cotton mill counted its savings, the Supreme Court invalidated the NRA; so wages instead of being raised were lowered. This was hard, because the workers in the cotton mills lost money in another way when TVA power was plugged in. They lived in company houses, and since their lights were on the company line, they had paid at the industrial rate—50 cents a month. For TVA power they paid the regular residential rate, with a 75-cent minimum. Electricity was cheaper now for everybody else in the town but two bits higher for them. The two bits counted. With a $4,000 weekly pay roll, the mill had 400 employees; you can figure the average wage for a forty-six-hour week.

In the spring of 1937, when everybody was doing it, the mill workers had the spunk to start a sitdown strike. Jimmy Cox, a machinist in the mill for seven years, was the leader. Jimmy had a wife and two small children to worry about, but he was young and hopeful. They asked for a 15 per cent raise in wages and a forty-hour week. Of course they didn't stand a chance to get it. The mill offered to compromise on 10 per cent, but it wasn't to be a raise; it would have to be a bonus at Christmas. And the management wouldn't reduce hours at all. As the strike started in April, Christmas seemed a long way off; so Jimmy Cox, with a two-to-one vote to back him, stood pat.

The management said that if the workers were going to be ugly about it, they would have to shut down the mill. Last summer the mill building, with a square tower like a feudal fort, was still shut. Southern workers do not break windows, and the glass was therefore still intact. But scarlet trumpet vines were holding the fort, and on the door a card read, "This property is now in the hands of the receiver appointed by the Chancery Court of Lee County, Mississippi." The mill cottages on the streets between the railroad tracks and the cotton fields bore the same placards. When evictions were tried during the strike, Jimmy Cox asked the Red Cross for tents because the mill workers had joined the Red Cross by a pay-roll checkoff, but Mrs. Rex Reed, the Lee County chairman, had no tents available. Nobody could say what the people lived on, for there is no "home relief," as Northerners know it, in Mississippi.

Congressman Rankin, in Washington, charged that the National Labor Relations Board was "conspiring with communistic influences to destroy Southern industries," and that "the ruthless manner in which they helped to destroy and forced the liquidation of the cotton mill in Tupelo, throwing all the employees out of work, and the brutal manner in which they are now trying to destroy the garment factories in that city is enough to stir the people of my state to revolt."

After the cotton-mill strike a loud-speaker was put in

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the garment factory to tell the girls how well off they were and that unions were not to be trusted. But wages were as low as $5 a week, and some of the girls were discontented enough to listen to Tupelo's first outside organizer. Ida Sledge came from one of the best families in Memphis, but she had been corrupted by Wellesley and social work. So Miss Sledge was asked to leave Tupelo by a committee of loyalists from Reed Brothers, and actually escorted out of town by a group of local business men. It may be embarrassing for Southern gentlemen to have to treat a lady in this fashion, but Southern papers, discussing Tupelo's trouble, had referred to the Wellesley girl as "an influx of C. I. O. agitators."

When the girls who had joined the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union lost their jobs, they appealed to the Labor Board—and Tupelo got busy organizing company unions. Members of the Chamber of Commerce, the City Council, and the Kiwanis formed a Citizens' Committee, which entertained loyal workers with patriotic speeches, a dinner at the Hotel Tupelo, and a barbecue at the Legion hut; the mayor issued a statement against agitators; and the sheriff announced his determination to "protect Tupelo's industries from outsiders." City ordinances sought to discourage distribution of union circulars, and both papers refused union advertising; the Tupelo *News* gritted its teeth over the need to keep "the virgin Southland free from a communistic organization," and dared the Labor Board to invade Dixie. Both papers printed the page advertisements of the Tupelo Garment Company urging industrial "cooperation" by all "true, red-blooded Americans." The citizens telegraphed Congressman Rankin and Senator Pat Harrison demanding defeat of the wage-hour law and congratulated Congressman Rankin when he warned Washington that the streets of Southern towns might be "stained with the blood of innocent people as a result of the activities of these irresponsible representatives of the so-called Labor Relations Board."

The nearest thing to bloodshed in Tupelo was the experience of Jimmy Cox. Tupelo was Jimmy's home town, just as it was Congressman Rankin's and Mr. Rex Reed's; he had taken civil-service examinations and was first on the list of eligible substitutes at the Tupelo post office. The cotton mill had been in receivership for a year. One day as he was walking along the streets a car drove up and a man told him to get in. Since another car was behind, with twelve men in the two, there was no use arguing. They took Jimmy twenty miles out into the country, tied a rope around his neck, and started to tie the other end to the rear axle of the first car. He talked them out of that, or maybe they were just trying to scare him; at any rate they stretched him over a log instead and beat him with their belts. The people who took care of him afterward said he was pretty badly hurt —it was feared he might lose an arm. He had to go for treatment to the new hospital, dedicated shortly before by Mr. Rex Reed.

That was last spring. Last summer Tupelo industry faced its crisis. All three factories had company unions, and more than twenty girls had been fired for membership in the I. L. G. W. U. Or so the union was prepared to prove by depositions taken in the Holiness Church. Since the Tupelo courthouse was not available for the NLRB hearing—"Tupelo don't want no riffraff in its courthouse," explained the farmer husband of one of the witnesses—lawyers and examiner moved over to Aberdeen, the next county seat, a smaller, older town peacefully asleep under its magnolia trees. Everybody expected the hearing to last for weeks, but it was over in two days. First two, then all of the girls discharged were ordered reinstated with back pay. Company unions were ordered dissolved, with a word about unfair practices.

The Labor Board works quickly in such cases because it is dealing with a familiar condition. Except for its TVA power, Tupelo resembles other little Southern towns as one houn' dawg resembles another; and in such little towns all over the South industrial feudalism is making its last stand. Of course the "loyal" girls who had saved on Coca-Colas to pay for the company union were surprised. The Tupelo *Journal,* announcing the result of the hearing, headlined its story "NLRB Turns Down Garment Workers' Plea," and quoted local opinion that the board was "under the thumb of John L. Lewis and his C. I. O. unions and it was useless to expect any just verdict." The *News* managed to make the decision sound favorable to the factories.

During the Civil War a Yankee general who had won a little engagement near Tupelo was persuaded to retreat and leave his wounded behind. Now, after the NLRB examiner had gone back to New York, there were casualties to be counted and a similar confusion as to which side had won. The union girls had their wages and a chance to sew more TVA-brand shirts, but one garment factory and the cotton mill would stay shut. And what good does reinstatement in a job do you if the big boss and the foreladies and right-thinking people in the town are still against you? The board may say "without prejudice" but it can't enforce it. It isn't as if there were jobs enough to go round.

There is no doubt about what the best people think. To learn their views you have only to attend Sunday school at Mr. Rex Reed's church. There, the week of the hearing, the teacher of an adult class departed from the regular lesson to say what a great mistake it was to think we could substitute social service for true faith. Some churches made that mistake and some modern schools, and our President made it when he planned to regulate wages and hours of work.

Tupelo is typical of that large section of the South which is willing to accept New Deal benefits, unwilling

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to undertake New Deal reforms. Right now, with a new reduction in rates and a profit of $40,000 on TVA power last year, it might be unsafe for anti-Administration forces to ask Tupelo to vote on a clear-cut choice between TVA plus NLRB or neither. What Tupelo wants is feudalism with electric fans.

In the state that inveigled WPA into subsidizing school manufacture of hosiery, TVA is not the only agency to be made an unwilling accessory to unfair enterprise. But the Tupelo labor case could have, for TVA, a greater significance than the Congressional hearings at Knoxville. The government as a manufacturer of power regulates its resale to domestic consumers; what about its use in industry? Congressman Rankin, one of the authors of the TVA act, insisted that passage of the wage-hour bill would mean "the end of civilization as we know it." In Tupelo, the day after the union victory, he was happy to talk about TVA and how much the Hotel Tupelo was saving on its light bill, but he wouldn't discuss labor questions. He didn't, he said, know what the cotton mill had paid its people. Congressman Rankin was reelected by a comfortable majority in the fall, and there can be no doubt that he is, for Tupelo, the perfect Representative.

It is less certain that it will be desirable for the country to make good in all respects a prophecy which President Roosevelt, in the first flush of enthusiasm over TVA achievements, voiced at Tupelo four years ago: "What you are doing here is going to be copied in every state in the Union."

[*This is the first of a series of three sketches intended to illustrate three parallel lines of development in the South today—the feudal town, the runaway Northern-industry town, and the "model" company town. The latter two will be described in early issues.*—EDITORS THE NATION.]

In the Wind

SURVEYS INDICATE that a large percentage of newspaper readers are "headline readers." Here are two warnings to those who skip the text. The Akron *Beacon Journal* recently published this headline: "No Third Term, Laborites Say." The dispatch beneath said nothing about a third term; it reported that Labor's Non-Partisan League would boycott "third-party movements." The New Haven *Courier Journal* ran this headline: "C. I. O. Lists Arguments for Labor Act Change." The dispatch stated that the C. I. O. had just issued a pamphlet called "Why the Wagner Act Should Not Be Amended."

THE NEWEST anti-Nazi story circulating in London concerns a drunk who was arrested in Germany for calling Göring a *Schweinhund*. He was punished for three offenses: (1) being drunk and disorderly; (2) using abusive language about a person in authority; (3) endangering the safety of the state by revealing an official secret.

IN A booklet published recently by the Osaka Chamber of Commerce appears this lament:

> The Japanese regret they are poor propagandists, especially in refuting lies circulated by the Chinese. . . . The Japanese cannot carry on propaganda because in their eyes it is tantamount to spreading false news.

NEWSPAPERS IN rebel Spain unearth strange scoops. A Seville paper, describing recent "Jewish provocations" in Germany, reports that "nevertheless the German people do not easily lose self-control or independence; not even one case of personal or material aggression against Jewish people has taken place." The *Corte de Castilla* of Valladolid has discovered the "secret" reason for French labor's efforts to retain the extra holiday provided in the Blum reforms and eliminated by the Reynaud decrees. Jewish influence, it finds, is behind the campaign because "Saturday is the Jewish holiday." What this journal has not discovered is that the extra holiday in France is on Monday.

ON NOVEMBER 19 this department stated that "negotiations looking toward ironclad censorship of Canadian news broadcasts" were taking place in Canada and that among the participants in the discussion were the Canadian Press and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Alan Plaunt of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and J. F. B. Livesay of the Canadian Press have since written us denying the statements and asserting that there is no basis for them. The original item was based on a source which we had every reason to believe was reliable; in the light of the information since received, however, we are satisfied that we were misinformed, and we are accordingly glad to withdraw the statements.

SPRINGING UP on Midwestern college campuses is a new organization called the Collegiate Forum of Americanism. Its spiritual and financial backers range from Grant Stauffer, Landon's Kansas City campaign manager, to Charles Walgreen, chain-drugstore magnate. Although its leaders insist it is "non-partisan," liberal students contend that its tone and direction are clearly anti-New Deal and pro-Republican.

TYPOGRAPHICAL TRAGEDIES: From the New York *Times,* December 4, 1938: "Then came the matron of honor, Mrs. John Roosevelt, in a velvet frock of blight blue, and a toque of ten other ushers." . . . From the St. Louis *Star-Times,* November 21, 1938, the headline: "Cofounder of Order Beautified by Pope Pius." . . . From the same story: "Mother Mazzarello was born in 1937 and died in 1881." . . . From *Our Sunday Visitor,* November 27, 1938: "Even allowing for exaggerations in testimony presented to the Dies committee, every prejudiced person must grant that witnesses are bringing to light information pointing to forces . . . which do not differ essentially from those to which the present excesses in Russia and Germany are traceable."

[*We invite readers to submit material for In the Wind. The $5 prize for the best item submitted during December goes to M. of Chicago for the story about the Chicago* Tribune *published two weeks ago.*]

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Issues and Men

BY OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

I HAVE read with interest Mrs. Franklin Roosevelt's vigorous defense of the right of a President's wife to earn money and of a President's children to lead their own lives regardless of their father's position. In an interview given to women reporters she said that she was speaking not merely for her own family but in general about the kind of life members of the Presidents' families should live. She asked if the American people wanted a family in the White House in which the children would make no effort to earn their own living and the wife renounce all her previous interests and obligations and be totally dependent upon her husband during his Presidency. This she thought might lead to the "wholly logical climax that a woman would refuse to live in the White House on such terms." Finally, she said she respected the ethical obligation upon a President's family not to profit from the association or use their position for special favors, but she did not feel obliged to renounce her normal way of living.

I am glad that Mrs. Roosevelt has thus openly stated her position. Let me say here that I admire her greatly and that I shall never cease to be grateful to her for having done so much to smash the silly tradition that was growing up around "the first lady of the land." The press of the country was doing its best to make of the President's wife a kind of quasi-royalty, and it was high time for a woman to come along and by her mode of life remind us that the President's wife is no different from the rest of American women, that she is entitled to no particular favors or special consideration as of right because her husband is President. I have said before that Mrs. Roosevelt rendered us a great public service when she declined to accept a police and secret-service escort. I happened to be in the same airplane with her once last winter, and it did me good to see her come in and take her place like any ordinary passenger without any escort whatever. I believe in the Cincinnatus idea for the President as well as for his wife. We ought never to forget in these days of dictators that the President is simply one of us who has left his plow for four or eight years and is going back to it.

But having said that, I want to point out one or two weaknesses in Mrs. Roosevelt's position. She assumes that every White House wife in the future will be as interested in affairs and as busy with her own special lines of activity as she herself. That is not likely to be the case. Mrs. Roosevelt's predecessors have been of the other kind. They have been women whose lives were wrapped up with those of their husbands before they entered the White House and who found they had enough to keep them busy in running the White House and living up to its social obligations. It is quite true that the American people would naturally like to have a family in the White House which stood on its own feet, whose members of working age set a good example of being workers and not drones. The difficulty here is that the members of Mrs. Roosevelt's family have not been content to take small positions and live quietly outside the limelight. They have been after the big money, and they have not been any too careful how they got it. This is a hard thing to say, and Mrs. Roosevelt may deny it, but I think it is none the less correct.

I refer specifically to one son and one son-in-law and her daughter, who have taken service with Hearst. Nobody has abused Franklin Roosevelt more than William Randolph Hearst. Pride in their father alone should have made it impossible for a Roosevelt, or a Roosevelt-in-law, to take Hearst money. More than that, Mrs. Roosevelt must know what every respectable newspaperman has felt—that Hearst has been for years the basest and most degrading influence in journalism. When he took a young newspaper reporter out of Washington and made him manager of his Seattle newspaper, although he had had no experience whatever in the difficult business of operating a daily, the deduction was inevitable that Mr. Boettiger was selected because he was the President's son-in-law. Not only is he drawing a very large salary, but his wife, in imitation of her mother, writes a daily column in that newspaper and is paid for it, too. Elliott Roosevelt has also taken service with the unspeakable Hearst, if reports are correct at a much larger salary than a young man of his years and inexperience could possibly earn if his name were not Roosevelt.

As for James Roosevelt, that is such a sad case that I prefer not to comment upon it as I do not wish to hurt Mrs. Roosevelt's feelings. There again it is impossible to believe that his new position has really been earned by him, or that his alliance with the insurance company in Boston, in which Mrs. Roosevelt has just become a director to represent his interest, has been altogether to his credit. With all friendliness to Mrs. Roosevelt and to the President, I am sorry to have to record my sincere belief that the example set by the Roosevelt children in their money-making is not one in which I as an American can take any particular pride. Sometimes I think it would have been better if they had done nothing.

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BOOKS *and the* ARTS

Philanthropy and Education

PHILANTHROPIC FOUNDATIONS AND HIGHER EDUCATION. By E. V. Hollis. Columbia University Press. $3.50.

THIS sober and scholarly study is the best that has so far been published on the subject of the philanthropic foundations and their relation to education. The foundations have come to occupy a pivotal position in American social life, and in the field of research it is hardly too much to say that they are now almost the dominant influence. By their decisions they go far toward swinging the balance of policy in one direction rather than another. Professor Hollis has covered a wide sweep in his survey. He deals with over one hundred institutions, ranging from minor bodies like the Washington Foundation to major organizations like those of Rockefeller and Carnegie. He explains their policies, their methods of organization, the range of their activities, the subject matter of their grants. His work is done with a thoroughness that merits high praise; and there is throughout the pages of his volume a pleasant sense of ironic humor not always characteristic of books of this kind. It is particularly useful, moreover, to have these powerful institutions set, as Mr. Hollis sets them, in the general social context of the time.

It is not easy to say what conclusions emerge from the study. That there are wide fields in which the foundations have done invaluable work is unquestionable. Not least in the natural sciences they have raised both the standards of research and the level of the educational institutions upon which they have bestowed their blessing. If there has been much waste in their expenditures, if the objectives they have blessed have tended to be obvious rather than exceptional, if, for the most part, they have acted upon the principle that to the college which hath, more shall be given, all this is pretty natural; foundations are mostly the work of conservative benefactors unlikely to experiment with the unknown or the exceptional. It is interesting to note from Mr. Hollis's illuminating tables how fully the activities of foundations follow the drift of general sentiment in the age. It is important to observe how completely their trustees represent the dominant type of business man, and how unsuccessful they have been in their effort to secure any other form of government. Mr. Hollis says relatively little about the executive officers of foundations, though one may, I think, legitimately infer from his account that he is aware of how little they have really done to secure, in a general way, a personnel in any way adequate to the immense authority they exert.

The problem raised by their growth and power remains unsolved. It is simply the problem that universities cannot afford to neglect their good-will, and that they are therefore compelled to devote a considerable part of their energies to discovering how this good-will may be acquired. It is not improbable that it would be a good thing if foundations were permitted neither to assist specific objectives, which has the effect of tilting the incidence of an institution in a particular direction, nor themselves to engage in inquiries, which tends to direct the energy of researchers into channels of which the foundations happen to approve. Anyone who has had experience of them in operation cannot but be aware that in both these fields a great deal has been done that ought not to have been done. People have become powerful in particular institutions because they could influence the trustees. Others have become significant less by reason of the quality of their research than because its subject matter happened to interest the officers of a foundation. Universities have been tempted to set up on a large scale departments which have later died because the supporting body ceased to be interested in their operation. In the social sciences particularly, the foundations have encouraged the growth of a type of cooperative research which has multiplied the business of description without offering any clear guidance to what the description implies. In many institutions scholars have been under pressure to associate themselves with projects of research which a particular foundation was eager to bless, to the detriment of the work they themselves wished to undertake. And the foundations have unquestionably fostered the growth of a research proletariat, the tragic race of "research assistants," who have made quantitative research a substitute in many places for serious thinking. If America had the custom of appointing royal commissions, it would be illuminating indeed to have one make a critical examination of the place and function of foundations in our society. I think it would emerge from the inquiry that, in general, where they have assisted objects the worth of which was, whether as to method or end, proved before they came into the field, they have been of high utility; but that where they have sought to innovate, whether in end or method, their trustees have been too ignorant and their executives too second-rate to be capable of the insight and imagination requisite to successful innovation.

HAROLD J. LASKI

A Music Critic to the Rescue

MUSIC ON RECORDS. By B. H. Haggin. Oxford University Press. $1.25.

COMPARED to the sum total of permanently enjoyable music, the amount of recorded music is small; but compared to the amount of recorded music, the amount available in the concert hall or on the radio is more inadequate still. This fact of our cultural life is plain but often overlooked. It is easy to infer that if orchestras give us only the best, as they profess to do, what they do not give us must be inferior and negligible. The United States, which seems to become noticeably fonder of music every Christmas, should be made aware of this fallacy. To recognize it as such is to recognize that music is of all the arts the most subject to arbitrary fashion and complacent routine.

With all their imperfections, therefore, recordings do for music what books do for poetry and the drama. They make

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us independent of public bards and private managers; they enable us to know and enjoy a larger repertory than current taste or commercial instinct will at any time support. Now, the chief imperfections of recordings are poor performance and poor mechanical reproduction. Add to these the unfamiliarity of certain musical idioms and the confusing verbiage of blurb writers and you have the raison d'être of B. H. Haggin's latest book, "Music on Records."

Its aim is to give a critical list of the particular works and recordings of works that the music library of a fairly eclectic citizen might possess. The beginner is advised, the disc-collector of yesteryear is warned, and the practiced connoisseur is agreeably diverted by discussions of artists, pieces, and performances about which he may or may not agree with Mr. Haggin. For it is throughout a question of Mr. Haggin's choice. In vigorous and unmistakable language he tells us what his ears have heard and what his mind has thought in the disinterested pursuit of musical pleasure. That is in itself one of the virtues of his little book. Because he is a good critic, good music is what he approves of. A good critic is a man whose wide-ranging explorations have left him with definite opinions and concrete reasons for his preferences and who is still able to see that his preferences are useful sidelights and not absolute mandates.

Mr. Haggin takes issue with the popular—or highbrow—estimates of Tchaikovsky, Brahms, César Franck, and Wagner. He gives a handsome introduction to certain minor masters while generally disallowing the cant of coteries, whether about Bach or about Bruckner; and in showing by his attitude that the only critical sin is pretense, he always leaves one with the feeling that as opponent or as ally he possesses a just mind and a sensitive one. Music for him is not a badge of superiority, a private corner for pedantry, or an occasion for "rich, beautiful prose." It is simply a means of communication and a source of joy.

Since the book is a reference work as well as a critical account, it may not be amiss to mention here some trivial errors which it is hoped the author will have a chance of rectifying in future editions. The Index, for example, is well planned but incomplete. The names of Ethel Luening and Ralph Kirkpatrick, and perhaps others, which are mentioned in the text, are not listed at the back. Some recordings, also, are suggested without serial numbers attached. It is not true that no part of Haydn's "Seasons" is recorded: French HMV has an aria sung by Morturier (No. 1137). It might also be useful to add to the well-turned remarks recommending Berlioz's works that the recorded pieces of his do not begin to give a sample of his variety and power. Lastly, as a single lapse from unimpeachable critical style, the too frequent use of "breath-taking" as an adjective of praise might be corrected.

In the light of Mr. Haggin's persevering critical work—which includes his previous "Book of the Symphony" and his fortnightly review column in *The Nation*—the outcry against "canned music" appears obscurantist and precious. The phonograph can give us access to more music, and more varied music, than was ever available before. If any objection is to be offered on the ground that machinery kills art, it must be restated in such a way as to fix the responsibility for the alleged murder: the machine left to its own devices is inert; left in the hands of commercial agencies it tends to increase human stupidity by multiplying its opportunities and embalming its products; but controlled by critical intelligence acting through a catholic public taste, the machine remains in fact the only means of truly democratizing culture.

JACQUES BARZUN

Young Shoppers

JOHNNY GET YOUR MONEY'S WORTH. By Ruth Brindze. Vanguard Press. $2.

BEHIND THE LABEL. By Margaret Dana. Little, Brown and Company. $2.

NOT everything that looks like a book should really be considered one. Ruth Brindze's "Johnny Get Your Money's Worth" should be called household equipment. It is a tool for making buying more intelligent and saving you money, just as important in the house as a vacuum cleaner and much more so than that extra little table to hold ash-trays. The book is written for children and about what children can buy, but there is plenty in it for grown-ups.

Take candy and the big-looking 50-cent package that holds no more than a 10-cent package. The actual weight is put on in mighty small type. There's a rum toffee without either rum or toffee; "wild cherry" drops whose label is marked in tiny type, "added acid, artificial flavor, certified food color"—you need a magnifying glass to learn that only the sugar is genuine. It seems beyond belief that a manufacturer will try to sell children Easter eggs poisoned with lead and zinc dyes. But apparently a penny is a penny, and a hundred children's pennies make a dollar. "Break and Take" is the alluring name of a penny-gambling candy scheme which I couldn't have resisted when I was a child. In a single year a billion pounds of candy may be sold in the United States. Children eat most of it. It is pretty hard to get a boy or girl to examine a label closely before taking a good big bite. But a book like this addressed directly to the child increases his own sense of importance and responsibility.

The American pennies that don't go for candy mostly go for ice cream, and Miss Brindze says that 200,000,000 gallons of ice cream are made in factories each year. But you can make a gallon look like two gallons by whipping air into it. Or take bicycles. Children like bicycles with extra trimmings, say the manufacturers, and so they pile on big fenders, headlights, and such. The et ceteras make the bicycle harder to pedal and slower, and of course they cost more. Miss Brindze's book turns the testing of a baseball glove into a sort of game for boys, and of course any boy will like to read that part about baseballs and then tell the other boys how much he knows.

This book isn't just a guide to help you pick out flaws and frauds. It also tells you how to find the good things—plenty of them. I wish I had known about its definite tests for buying a fountain pen when I got my last one. I made some feeble attempts to write a word or two, but Miss Brindze's tests, so easy to do at the counter, never occurred to me. This is a new kind of consumer book, and well done.

"Behind the Label," by Margaret Dana, tells valuable things about fabrics and clothes. It gives precise technical information about textiles and interesting details about the fashion

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racket, silk stockings, and furs. It has the gentle tone that might be expected when you know that much of it ran in the *Atlantic Monthly*. Miss Dana believes that products have deteriorated partly because the manufacturer has lost contact with his ultimate customers; he is in touch instead with dealers and salesmen, who prefer "appearance value" to "performance value." She gently chides dishonest advertising.

HELEN WOODWARD

Wordsworth and Coleridge

FAREWELL THE BANNER. By Frances Winwar. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $3.50.

IN "Poor Splendid Wings" and "The Romantic Rebels" Mrs. Winwar proved that books about poets dead and gone could make fascinating reading, could even win a place on the best-seller lists. In "Farewell the Banner" she has again taken the material usually relegated to the formidable pages of scholarly journals and successfully shaped it into an engrossing portrait of two writers, Wordsworth and Coleridge, and Wordsworth's devoted sister Dorothy.

In view of the not altogether unjustifiable aversion of the average reader to works about long-dead writers, one might well hazard a theory as to why Mrs. Winwar succeeds where most others fail. Certainly it is not because of any superficiality, or sensationalism, or lack of scholarly research: she has digested all the most authentic sources and has simply breathed upon this material with her usual warm spirit of interpretation, neither adding nor extenuating. Perhaps the secret lies in the fact that in each of her books she has presented not a single figure but rather a group of closely related writers whose dealings with each other help to keep them human for us, whereas in the usual literary biography the lens of the camera is focused so narrowly upon the one central figure that he tends to lose his humanity, to give the impression of a mere machine for turning out literature.

There must, of course, be one dominant personality. In "Poor Splendid Wings" it was Dante Rossetti; in the new book it is Coleridge who, in spite of his erratic and slothful temperament, his shrinking from the material responsibilities of life, and his self-abasement before first Southey and then Wordsworth, stands out and wins the reader's sympathy, as he obviously has that of Mrs. Winwar. For Wordsworth was not a lovable character; supremely egotistical, essentially puritanical in spite of his liberal views on theology, utterly wrapped up in his mission and in dark musings on his youthful affair with Annette Vallon, he sucked up the energies of those around him and gave little in return. Dorothy he doubtless loved, though even upon her worship he made exorbitant demands; as for Coleridge, whose stimulating presence stirred men's minds like a powerful drug, Wordsworth's disparagement of his sensitive friend's poetry was at least partly responsible for the latter's decision to abandon his chosen career and devote himself to the drudgery of lecturing and prose.

This poetic death of Coleridge is the central theme of the book, and the title, adapted from "Othello," symbolizes the lament of the poet for his art, as it does the lament of the Moor for his more warlike trade:

> O now for ever
> Farewell the tranquil mind! farewell content!
> The royal banner and all quality . . .
> Farewell! Othello's occupation's gone!

With his own valedictory Coleridge read the obsequies over his career as a poet of one great finished poem and several magnificent fragments.

And yet it is questionable whether this ignominious conclusion, so tragic to the man, really resulted in a very great loss to English letters. Coleridge might or might not have produced more poetry equal to "Christabel," but he lived to exert a profound influence on his time, as lecturer, as philosopher, and, above all, as conversationalist—if, indeed, his conversation was not one continued lecture. As one critic remarked, "He threw a great stone into the standing-pool of contemporary thought." He had, to use Mrs. Winwar's phrase, "the seminative power." The wild seeds of his imagination, "plentiful as thistledown, settled upon the retentive soil of Wordsworth's mind and bided their time. Everything Coleridge said, a word, a thought, a fleeting allusion or some elaborate extension of his philosophical discoveries, found a furrow for later root." Such a man, even in defeat, is worth knowing.

LOUIS B. SALOMON

The Machine Wins

F. O. B. DETROIT. By Wessel Smitter. Harper and Brothers. $2.50.

HERE is a novel, the first within my knowledge, which expresses successfully the major preoccupation of civilized life—the domination of man by the machine. Mr. Smitter is enabled by his experience to adopt the direct and most forcible approach. The greater part of the drama takes place within a big automobile factory in Detroit, and we watch the two contrasted protagonists. Benny, who tells the story, is an old hand. He has worked for the Holt plant before; his ambition is to become what is called a straw boss, and he nearly becomes a stool pigeon. With complete simplicity he accepts Mr. Holt's booklets and dicta; he doesn't like to tell a lie because "Mr. Holt is against lying." It is the new theology.

Russ, on the other hand, knows nothing of factory life, having come direct from a lumber camp. He wants to make and save money so that he can take up clamming and have an open-air independent life. The first job he gets in the factory suits him well, for it gives him scope to use his brains and initiative. He runs an electric crane which handles big steel, and handles it in such a way as to inspire the watchful and protective Benny to rhapsody. But then comes marriage with an Italian taxi-dancer, and a baby is on the way when the factory closes temporarily as a result of the obvious machinations of big business. After a long period of semi-starvation, the two men go back to different work. Now Russ is "on the line": he has to feed the machine instead of controlling it. He sees around him men who are half crazy because of the continual tension of high-speed methods, and fears for his own sanity. In the end it is another calamity which overtakes him.

Dynamic, original, powerful are adjectives that will have

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been applied to Mr. Smitter's book for its quickfire, intimate narrative style. They are deserved, but the real strength of the story is the economy with which it lays bare this new cancer in the heart of progress. NORAH HOULT

The Railroads in the Nineties

REORGANIZATION OF THE AMERICAN RAILROAD SYSTEM. 1893-1900. By E. G. Campbell. Columbia University Press. $4.50.

THIS excellent documentation of the great railroad crisis of the nineties amply illustrates the fact that Mr. Micawber has been the patron philosopher of American railroad finance. For the railroad crisis from which the country is suffering today is merely a repetition on a larger scale of the earlier crisis, which was solved by the elder Morgan on the assumption that something would surely turn up to solidify the water his reorganizations poured into the railroads.

The specialized task which Dr. Campbell has set himself covers minutely the period of bankruptcy and reorganization which in so many ways launched the modern America of the trusts. The basic assumption accepted by all the reorganizers was that our industry would continue to expand during the first half of this century as rapidly as it had expanded during the last half of the last century, and therefore that the present generation could absorb and pay for all the watered capital and bad debts of the Robber Barons. The first half of this assumption has been amply justified. Who can deny that industry has grown as rapidly during the age of Ford as it did during the age of Bessemer? The second assumption has been invalidated by precisely the same practice which brought on the crisis of the nineties. We have not absorbed the debt burden which we inherited in the form of railroad bonds; on the contrary, the unbalanced budgets of the railroads, their inability to pay as they go, is brewing a crisis even more dangerous than that of which Dr. Campbell writes.

It is necessary only to substitute modern dates and modern bad actors for those of Dr. Campbell's period. Take the case of the Union Pacific. During the period of the pork barrel which followed the Civil War, government land and money grants made possible the building of the great transcontinental railroad systems, one of the foremost of which was the Union Pacific. The government, counting interest on its money, was owed some $70,000,000. The arrangement called for the Union Pacific to pay a fixed portion of its annual revenues into a sinking fund until a sum was accumulated sufficient to enable the road to pay off the government. This was never done, so that when the debt matured, the road was ready for reorganization. And Jett Lauck, the famous labor economist, says that the original "fictitious securities were perpetuated in the capitalization of the Union Pacific in the reorganization of 1896 and involved . . . an annual drain upon its resources of $5,000,000." Now substitute the B. and O. for the Union Pacific, and 1939 for 1896. In 1939 the billion-dollar B. and O. will be forced to pay some of its bondholders off to the tune of $51,000,000, of which it has a chance of raising not a dollar from its present resources. Or consider the plight of our railroad system as a whole, which squandered more than $2,000,000,000 on bond-

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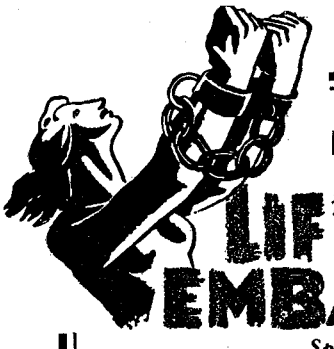

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Int'l Famous Journalist

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Pol. Com. Lincoln Brigade

Maj. Milton Wolff
Commander Lincoln-Washington Brigade. Just returned from Spain

Dr. Edith Summerskill
British Labor Party M.P. Outstanding Opponent of Chamberlain

— *also* —

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holders during the last depression and left itself without adequate funds for buying needed equipment and thus carrying its share of capital-goods buying power.

Throughout our history the methods of capitalizing bad debts and solemnly passing them on to the *rentiers* of the next generation, which Dr. Campbell so adequately describes in his account of the bankruptcy of road after road, have returned to plague us in the form of impaired railroad purchasing power for steel and other materials and astronomic debts, maturing after many years, which the roads are unable to meet. Thirty-eight years after the great period of reorganization ended, the railroads are returning to the same bankrupt state in which Morgan and Harriman found them, and this time a different method of reorganization, one in the public interest, will be needed.

ELIOT JANEWAY

Critique of the Security Act

INSECURITY. Second Revised Edition. By Abraham Epstein. Random House. $4.

THE revision of this fundamental book describes the developments in the field of social security down to the present, and gives at the same time the most trenchant criticism of the Social Security Act and its administration which has thus far appeared. More than any other single person, except President Roosevelt himself, Mr. Epstein has been the driving force for a sound system of social insurance to provide pooled protection from risks against which workers cannot individually guard themselves. When the Roosevelt Administration came to draft its plan for a national system, it did not, however, take counsel with either Mr. Epstein or that other seasoned authority, I. M. Rubinow, and the plan which it finally adopted was contrary to that which they advocated.

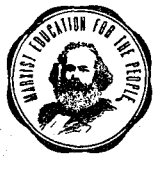
So far as old-age insurance was concerned, the Administration chose to finance the system entirely from pay-roll taxes, to make the younger workers pay for the "unearned" annuities granted to those in the upper age groups, and, as a means of reducing future taxes, to accumulate a huge reserve the interest upon which was designed to help pay future annuities. Mr. Epstein's corrosive criticism shows all of these steps to have been ill advised. He correctly points out that it is the wage-earners who pay pay-roll taxes in the form of lower wages or higher prices, even when these are nominally advanced by the employers, and he argues that the wealthier members of the community should assume some of this burden. This is especially true so far as the cost of the unearned annuities to the older workers is concerned, since these should be charges upon society rather than upon the younger generation. Nor does he have much difficulty in showing the weaknesses in the plan for huge reserves. The supposed analogy with private insurance companies is wholly inapplicable, since the government by its powers of compulsion is assured of a future flow of income which it can use to meet future claims for benefit; whereas this is not the case with the private companies. There is great danger, moreover, that the presence of these reserves will tempt Congress to waste them on non-income-producing and non-socially-beneficial projects, and leave the fund with a dead mass of government bonds, the interest on which will have to be met out of a national income which will be no greater because of such expenditures. It would be better under such circumstances to accumulate only a contingency reserve and to finance future expenditures directly from future taxes without resorting to the fiction of the reserve.

Mr. Epstein also properly protests against the abuses in the administration of old-age pensions, particularly in such states as Oklahoma, Missouri, and Ohio; his early exposure of these matters helped to focus public attention upon them and gave to the Social Security Board a large degree of public support when it sought to protect the integrity of the system.

The system of fifty-one separate state and territorial funds for unemployment insurance also comes in for justified criticism. Since the assessments are virtually uniform among the states but the relative incidence of unemployment varies, it is inevitable that the states with a high relative volume of unemployment will—in the not distant future—exhaust their reserves and, unless other provision be made, will be forced to curtail benefits. Just as a pooling of funds within a state is needed to insure benefits to the unemployed in the depressed industries and to prevent a "freezing" of idle plant reserves, so some federal pooling is needed to protect the unemployed in the more depressed states and to permit the funds to flow most freely where most needed.

There is only one major point on which I believe Mr. Epstein errs. This lies in not according due praise to the Roosevelt Administration for the progress which it has made in the field of social insurance. With all its faults the Social Security Act is on the whole a gigantic step forward. Most of its defects can and, I believe, will be removed by future amendments, provided only that we can keep a progressive national Administration in power. The recent elections have, however, raised the definite threat of future reaction which may undo much of the progress made. In view of this peril, I cannot help wishing that the true friends of social security might possess a greater degree of spiritual unity. Criticism should continue, but those who hold a fundamental basic faith should realize that what they believe in common is far more important than their points of difference.

PAUL H. DOUGLAS



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